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BATTLE OF DONG AP BIA - HILL 937 10 - 21 May 1969

The battle to defeat the 29th NVA Regiment dug in on the slopes summit of Dong Ap Bia Mountain was the most intense and brutal conflict entered into by the 3d Bde 101st Abn Div since its arrival in the Republic of Vietnam in December 1967. "Hamburger Hill" as Dong Ap Bia has come to be called, was captured in the traditional infantry manner, by assault. That this victory was obtained with so few allied casualties can be attributed to the teamwork and near-perfect coordination between ARVN & US, as well as US Air Force, Artillery, and the Infantry. The battle of "Hamburger Hill" is characterized by the words of the motto of the Third Brigade, "Ready to Move, Ready to Fight," Airborne!

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HEADQUARTERS 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION
Office of the Commanding General
APO San Francisco 96383

AVDG--CG

24 May 1969

FACT SHEET

SUBJECT: Summary of Action and Results

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AUTHORITY OF DOD DIR. 5200.1 R
BY RAKERS ON 11 MAY 99

1. The initial assault on Dong Ap Bia, as part of the 101st Airborne Division participation in Operation Apache Snow, was made by the 3-187th Infantry into an LZ 1 kilometer northwest of Dong Ap Bia.
2. The movement toward Dong Ap Bia immediately encountered well dug in enemy who fought hard to prevent penetration of his base area. The enemy appeared to be well dressed and was well supplied with weapons and ammunition. He made good use of his concentric rings of fortified positions and employed RPG and automatic weapons extensively.
3. Between 10 and 16 May 1969, the 3-187th Infantry employed heavy TAC Air and artillery fires to reduce the enemy positions and clear away the jungle undergrowth. They then maneuvered their forces to apply further pressure on the enemy and cause him to dispose his forces to additional air strikes and artillery fires. From all indications, the enemy was reinforcing his positions nightly from Laos. By 15 May, after a week of heavy close-in fighting, the enemy complex on Dong Ap Bia was well developed and an additional Battalion (1-506 Inf) maneuvered towards Hill 937 from the southwest. On 19 May 1969, the 2-501st Infantry and the 2-3rd ARVN were deployed into the area to apply pressure from all sides. On 20 May, after further artillery and tactical air strikes the battalion's objectives were secured astride Dong Ap Bia ridge.
4. During the operation two enemy battalions (7th and 8th) of the 29th NVA Regiment were identified from captured documents found in the area and it appears that regimental and other supporting units (Anti-aircraft, heavy weapons and engineer) were also involved. These units had not been identified in-country since the fall of 1968 and it appears that they had just recently returned, presumably to increase enemy military activity in Thua Thien Province. Confirmed total body count of 630 enemy killed accounts for about one-half of the total enemy force. In addition to these confirmed enemy killed, there were substantial enemy casualties which could not be counted directly, but which significantly reduce the effectiveness of the Regiment. A PW stated that only 20% of the two companies with which he was familiar survived the Allied attack. In addition to enemy casualties, a major base area was neutralized and significant quantities of enemy supplies were captured including 177 weapons.

SUBJECT: Summary of Action and Results

5. The effectiveness with which fire power and maneuver were combined is shown by the 10 to 1 enemy to friendly kill ratio that was achieved despite the rugged terrain, dense vegetation and the enemy's use of prepared positions. B-52 strikes and tactical air strikes were placed on bases and infiltration routes to inflict further casualties on enemy forces attempting to reinforce or escape from the Dong Ap Bia area.

6. As a result of his losses, it is estimated that two enemy battalions involved in this operation are no longer combat effective and that the ability of the newly arrived 29th NVA Regiment to conduct offensive operations in the immediate future has been severely limited. Thus, a major threat to Thua Thien Province has been removed.

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FACT SHEET

SUBJECT: Description of Operation vic Dong Ap Bia

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BY RAKERS ON 11 May 99

.. (C) BACKGROUND

a. XXIV Corps Operation APACHE SNOW was directed at enemy forces, bases and lines of communications in and adjacent to the Northern A Chau Valley. As part of this operation, the 101st Airborne Division in coordination and cooperation with the 1st ARVN Division conducted a multi-battalion combat assault into LZ's adjacent to the Laotian border on 10-11 May 1969. Four fire bases were either constructed or expanded to support the operation.

b. By the evening of 9 May the Division was in a posture to launch an airmobile assault the next day. Ten artillery batteries(-) and necessary troops were positioned at FB's Bradley (YD273123), Airborne (YD355071), Murrehee (YC398949), Bergtesgaden (YD424011), and Cannon (YD474028). Units participating in the combat assault had marshalled their forces in the vicinity of FB Blaze (YD536020). At 0730 hours, 10 May the 101st Airborne Division and the 1st ARVN Division commenced a four battalion combat assault into selected LZ's utilizing 65 UH1H helicopters. The combat assault onto each LZ was preceded by a seventy minute TAC air and artillery preparation with final suppressive fires provided by air sav gunships and ARA. Simultaneously two ARVN battalions which had been prepositioned on 9 May conducted reconnaissance in force operations north and south of the general area selected for the combat assault. At 1230 hours one ARVN company combat assaulted onto FB Turnage (YD252090) followed by a 105 artillery battery in order to be in position to support the combat assault of the 3/1st ARVN Battalion on the 11th. All LZ's were green and light resistance was encountered the first day. The combat assault was a success - the element of surprise had been achieved and not a single aircraft was destroyed by enemy ground fire during the assault phase.

c. As part of the overall operation, the area in the vicinity of Dong Ap Bia - Hill 937 (YC328982) was selected as one of the areas to be searched following the initial combat assault. Intelligence gathered throughout April and early May 1969 indicated enemy possible enemy presence in this area throughout April and early May 1969, and SLAR readings indicated a pattern of west to east movement in the area throughout April 1969. Additionally, VR's in late March and mid-April revealed signs of trail activity in the vicinity of Hill 937. Accordingly,

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SUBJECT: Description of Operation vic Dong Ap Bia

the 3-187th Infantry combat assaulted into an LZ approximately one kilometer northwest of Hill 937 with the intention of moving southeast from the border area towards the hill. The 1-506th Infantry landed approximately four kilometers southwest of Hill 937 and initially conducted RIF operations southwest of the hill.

d. The Dong Ap Bia complex is a prominent line of ridges running southwest-northeast overlooking an east-west valley approach to A Luoi and the northern A Shau Valley. Additionally this ridge sits astride a major trail network that supports the infiltration of enemy supplies and personnel into RVN. The most prominent feature of the Ap Bia ridge is the saddle between hill 916 on the southwest end and hill 937 on the northeast. The area is covered with multi-canopy jungle and thick undergrowth, and movement over the steep slopes was extremely difficult. Except for frequent afternoon thundershowers, the weather was clear and suitable for supporting air operations.

2. (C) NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF ACTION AROUND AP BIA - HILL 937
(10-24 May 69).

The 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division initiated Operation APACHE SNOW in coordination and cooperation with the 1st 3d Regiments of the 1st ARVN Division to block enemy escape into LAOS along Route 922 and to interdict Route 548; and to conduct RIF operations in zone to destroy enemy forces and caches. This narrative is concerned with a small segment of that operation but one that was to prove to be the most significant -- attack of the Dong Ap Bia Ridge. (Sketches depicting this action are appended at the end of the following narrative).

a. On 100814H May 1969, the 3-187th Infantry combat assaulted into an LZ in the vicinity of YC314988 just west of Dong Ap Bia. D/3-187 immediately made contact with an unknown size enemy force. Approximately two hours later while moving from the LZ, B/3-187 made contact, returned fire and killed two NVA. Initial impressions were that the NVA were probably trail watchers, but after sustaining three wounded the battalion concluded that the firing was too well controlled and that stiffer resistance might be encountered. (The following morning 2 more bodies were found in the underbrush.)

b. On 11 May, the 3-187th placed artillery and TAC air on a large bunker complex located astride their axis of advance. RIF operations followed the strikes as the 3-187th moved to the southeast toward Hill 937. While searching the hut and bunker complex, the 3-187th found 5 NVA bodies killed by the artillery/TAC air preparation. A significant discovery in the area was a group of documents identifying the unit as the 29th NVA Regiment. The documents showed that the 29th NVA Regiment had returned from North Vietnam in April and had been conducting reconnaissance operations between BA 611 in Laos and Route 548 in the A Shau Valley.

SUBJECT: Description of Operation vic Dong Ap Bia

c. On 12 May the 3-187th continued their push along the rough, canopied ridges. By 0905H they made heavy contact with a well disciplined force estimated at two companies dug in about 200 meters to their front. They maneuvered against the force and killed 3 NVA. The battalion called in AAA and artillery fire in order to dislodge the enemy from his fortified position. The enemy held fast, however, and throughout the day the 3-187th received heavy automatic weapons and RPG fire and limited mortar fire. Heavy TAC air and artillery fires were placed on the enemy positions.

d. The situation remained unchanged on 13 May as the enemy stayed in bunkers and employed small arms, RPG, automatic weapons and mortars against maneuvering elements of the 187th. The 3-187th returned fire and employed additional artillery and tactical air.

e. On the morning of the 14th B, C, and D companies of the 3-187th once again began the slow and deliberate maneuver under artillery, TAC air and gunship support. Under this heavy attack the enemy fell back. Contact terminated about 1700 and the 187th swept the bunker area to find 13 NVA killed in action by artillery, 47 NVA killed by small arms fire and 29 killed by air strikes.

f. The 187th continued its drive along the ridges to Hill 937 on the morning of 15 May. As the line companies maneuvered toward their objective they discovered 14 NVA bodies from the previous day's contact. By 1500H they were in heavy contact and realized the force was more than a normal NVA battalion size element. Rates of fire were extremely heavy and the enemy troops skillfully employed command detonated claymores in large quantities. Enemy reinforcements were being brought into the contact zone, the new troops had fresh haircuts, clean uniforms, and new weapons. The enemy was deployed in concentric rows of bunkers which afforded maximum utilization of the terrain available. The intense bunker to bunker fighting left 62 more NVA dead and the 1-506 Infantry was directed to move north to reinforce the 3-187th in order to take Hill 937.

g. At 160110H May C/3-187th Infantry began receiving grenades, satchel charges, and small arms fire on their position. Spooky (Air Force C47 flare ship with mini-guns) was employed from 0200-0600 resulting in three secondary explosions. A first light check revealed 14 NVA killed. The 1-506th was maneuvering north to effect its link-up with the 187th when it received heavy fire from Hill 916 (YC3196). The 1-506th continued their movement toward the 187th with the support of air strikes.

h. On 17 May, the 187th occupied an overwatch position and directed CS gas strikes. The 1-506th continued to maneuver to reinforce the 187th. Although the enemy had gas masks, the CS attacks were effective and caused him to leave some of his bunkers.

SUBJECT: Description of Operation vic Dong Ap Bia

i. By 180715H May B/1-506th Inf began closing on the southern base of Hill 937. A and C/1-506th Inf closed in on either flank. At 1330H the 3-187th Inf having been under continuous fire, took up positions NW of Hill 937. Artillery, TAC air, ARA and gunships then proceeded to pound the hill. A/2-506th Inf was alerted and deployed to FB Blaze (EC5302) to be available if required.

j. On the morning of 19 May, with the 1-506th Inf on the south and the 3-187th Inf on the north, the enemy positions were subjected to continuous artillery and TAC air fires. The 2-501st Inf and the 2/3d ARVN were alerted to prepare to assist in the final sweep of the enemy's fortified positions surrounding the entire ridge line. By late afternoon an additional 175 enemy bodies had been accounted for.

k. Late in the morning of 20 May, 4 battalions executed a coordinated assault on Hill 937. The 3-187th Inf, with A/2-506th Inf attached, assaulted the hill from the north; the 1-506th Inf from the south and southwest; the 2/3d ARVN from the southeast; and the 2-501st Inf from the northeast. The 3-187th swept up the hill from the north, while the 1-506th and the 2-501st blocked possible routes of escape. The 2/3d ARVN moved onto Hill 937 from the south. By 1200 hours battalion objectives on the Dong Ap Bia Ridge were taken. The determined enemy resistance disintegrated as friendly forces overran enemy positions resulting in a total body count for 20 May 109.

l. On 21 May 1969 allied forces swept over the hill to check the enemy base area in detail. After ten days of hard fighting the 3-187th Infantry had earned a well deserved rest and returned to the coastal plains. The 1-506th Inf secured the abandoned enemy positions while the 2-501st Inf conducted RIF operations to the west. The 2/3d ARVN conducted RIF operations to the east. Friendly reconnaissance of the area encountered only isolated and sporadic resistance. An additional 59 enemy killed were discovered and 89 weapons were captured.

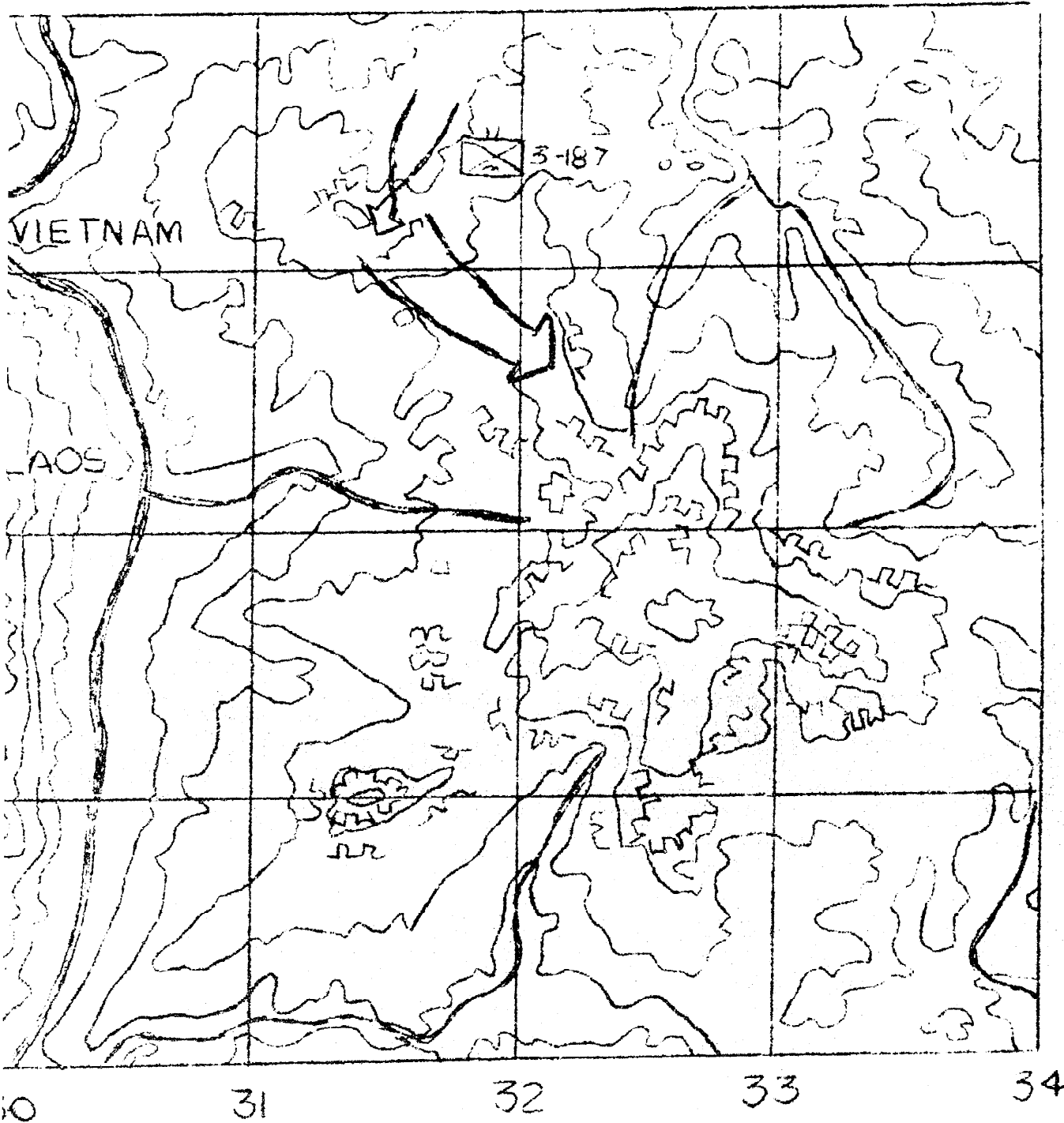
m. The Dong Ap Bia operation cost the enemy a total of 630 NVA KIA. In addition to these confirmed casualties, a PW captured during the operation indicated that 80% of the units in his area were casualties. On 22 May the 2-501st Inf and the 2/3d ARVN continued search operations in the vicinity of Hill 937, accounting for 77 NVA killed and 3 crew served weapons captured. The search operation continued on the 23d of May with the 1-506th Inf finding 10 more NVA bodies and the 2-501st Inf finding 3 bodies. On 24 May the 1-506th Inf discovered 51 individual weapons and the 2-501st Inf found 1 NVA KIA.

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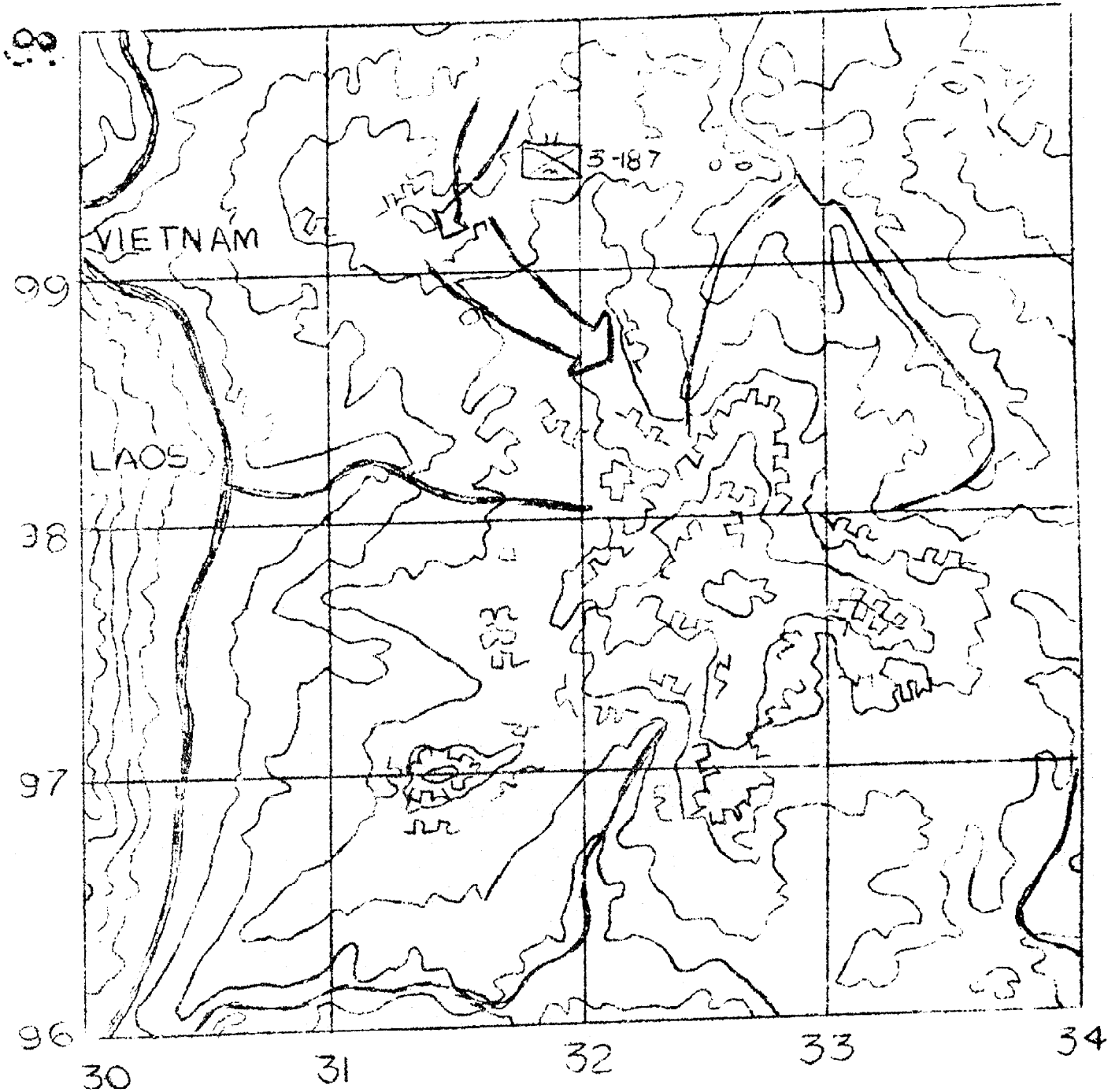
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SITUATION 10 MAY 1969

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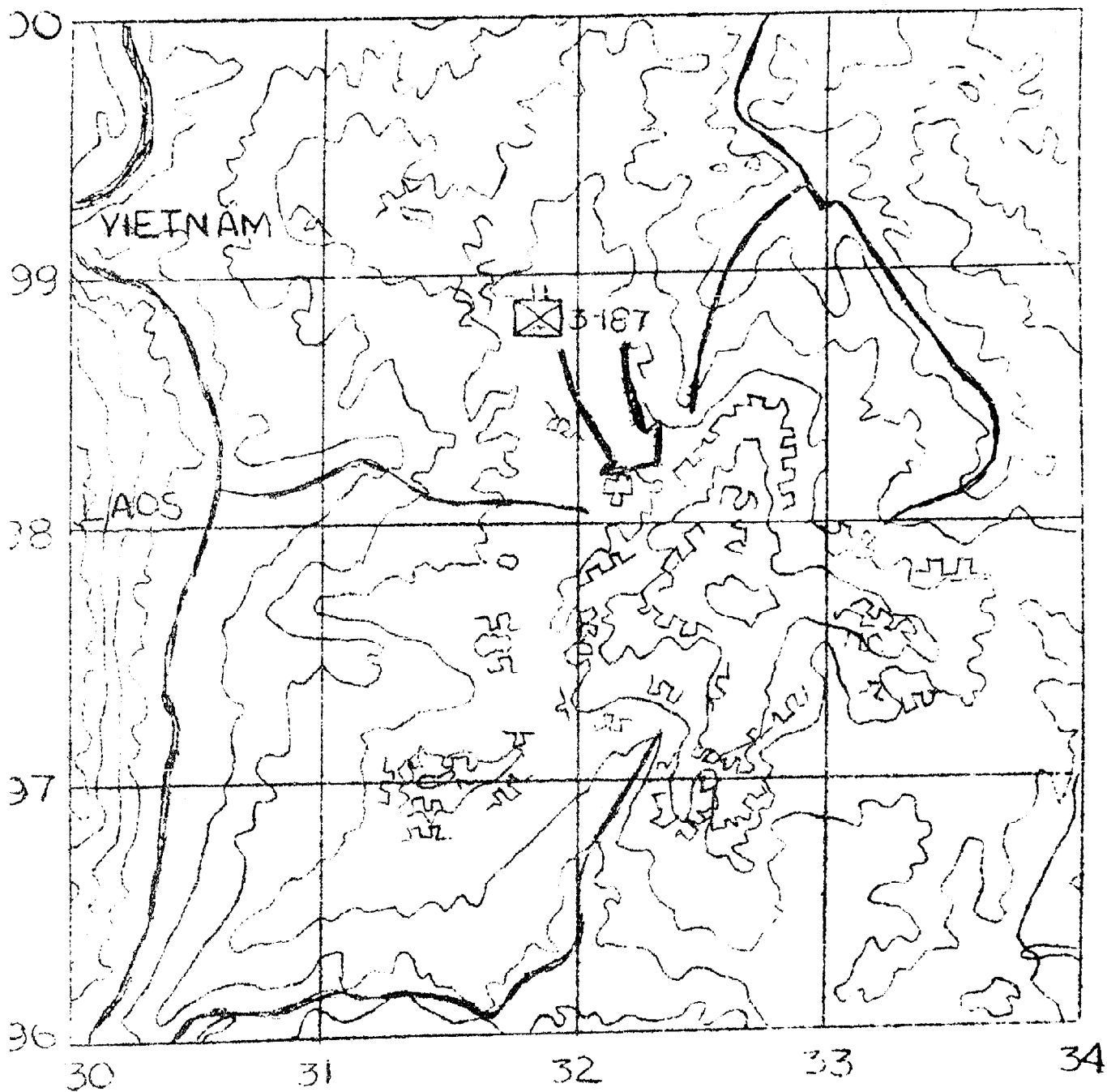


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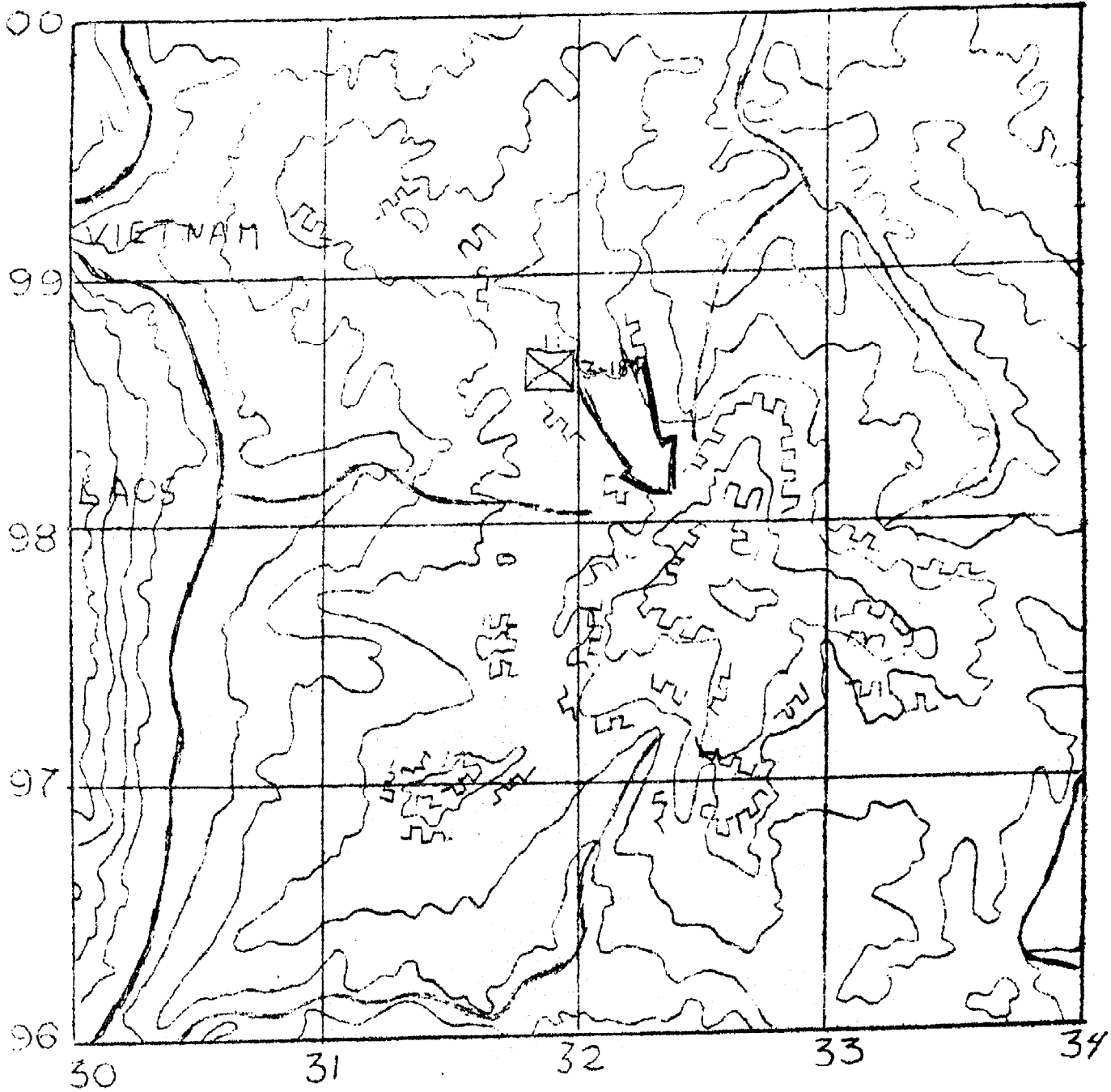
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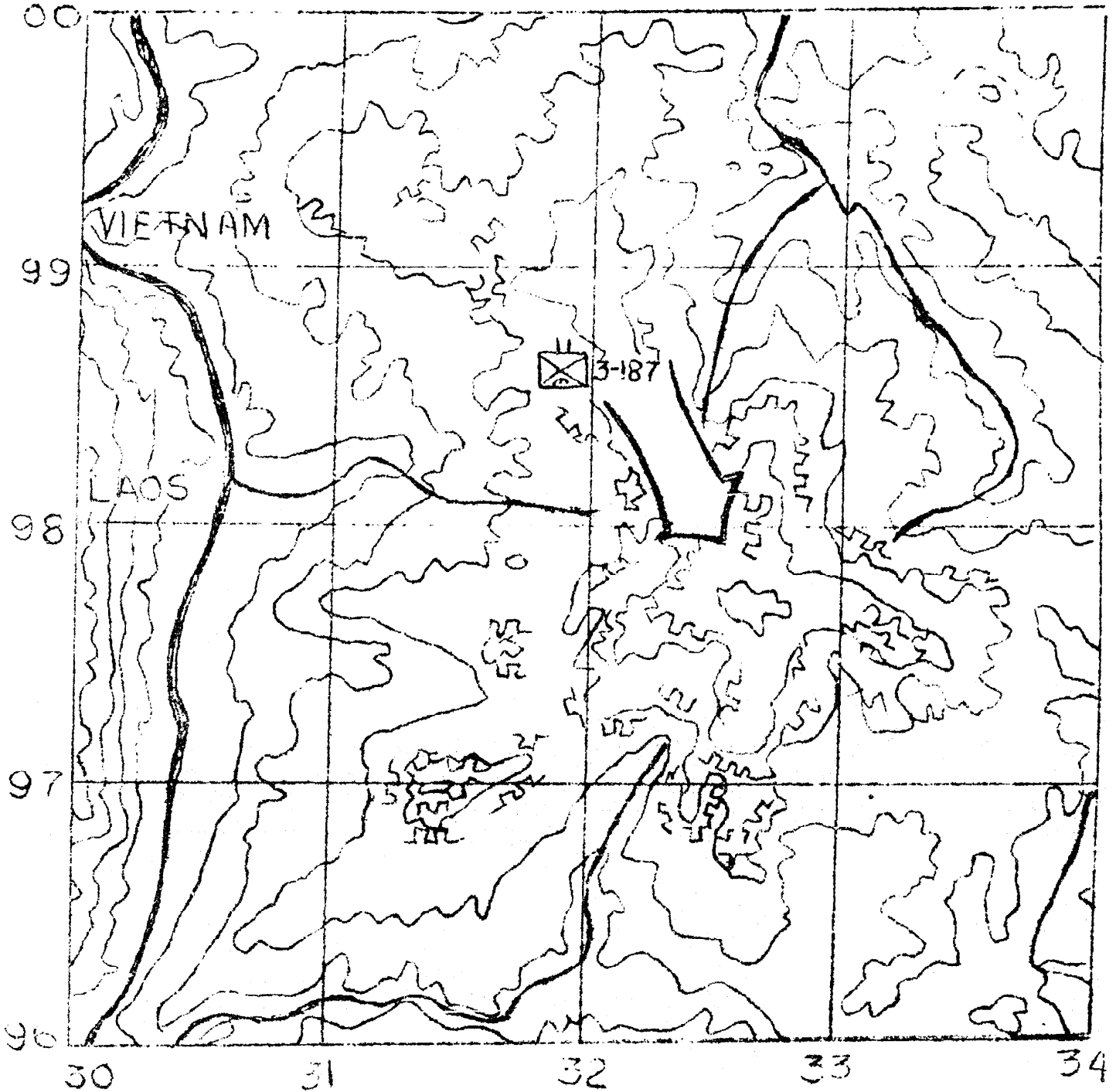
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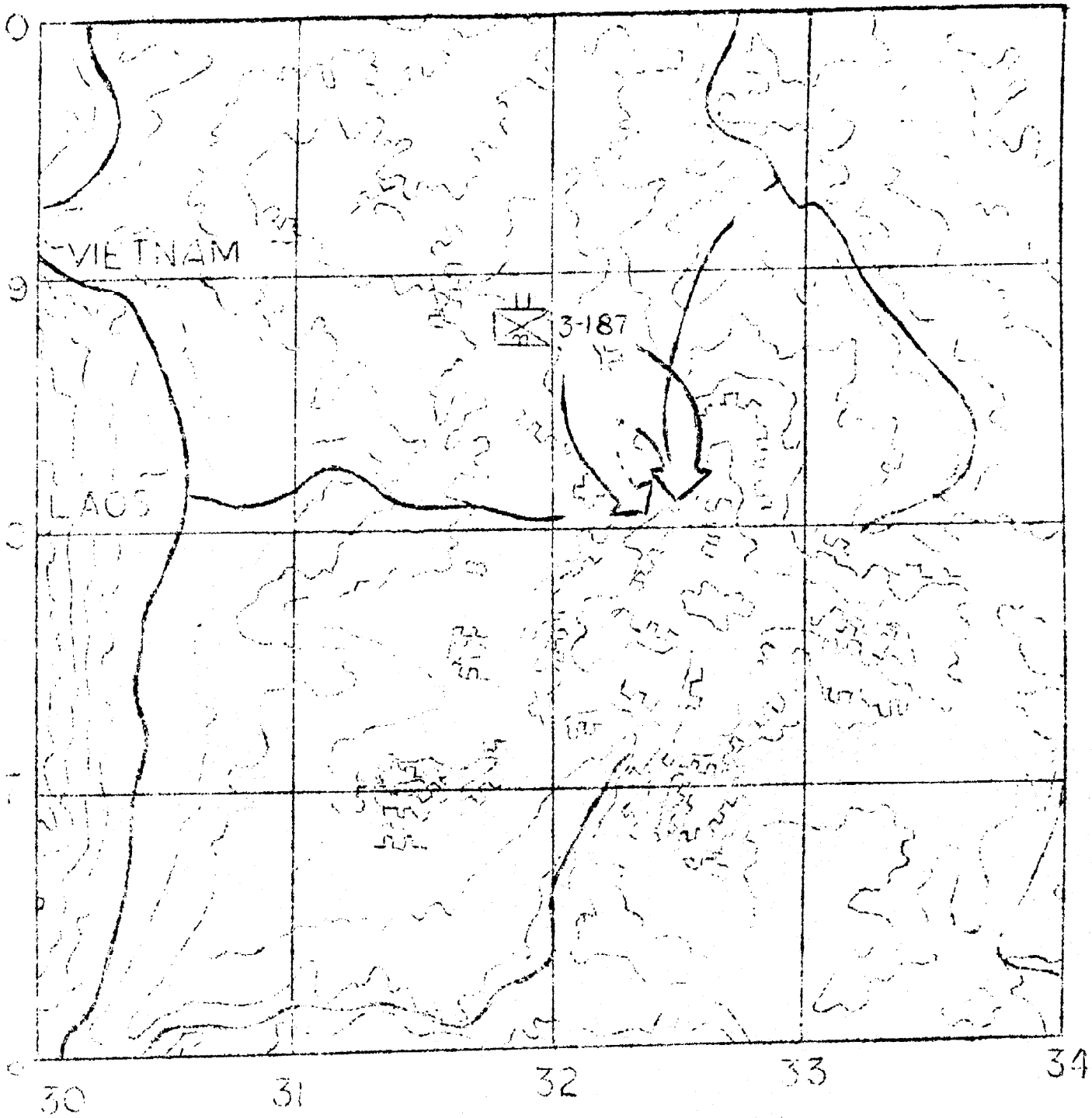
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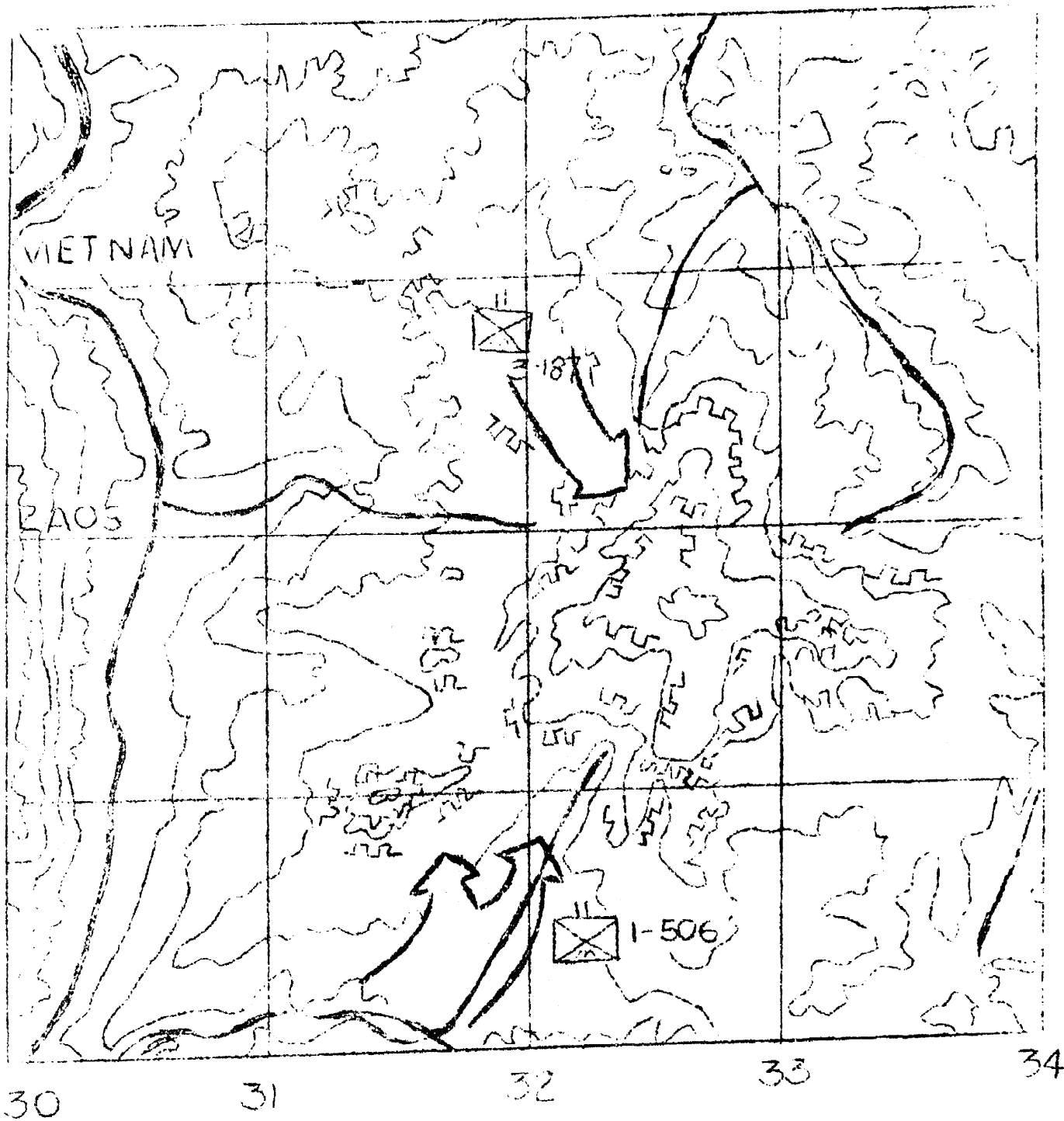
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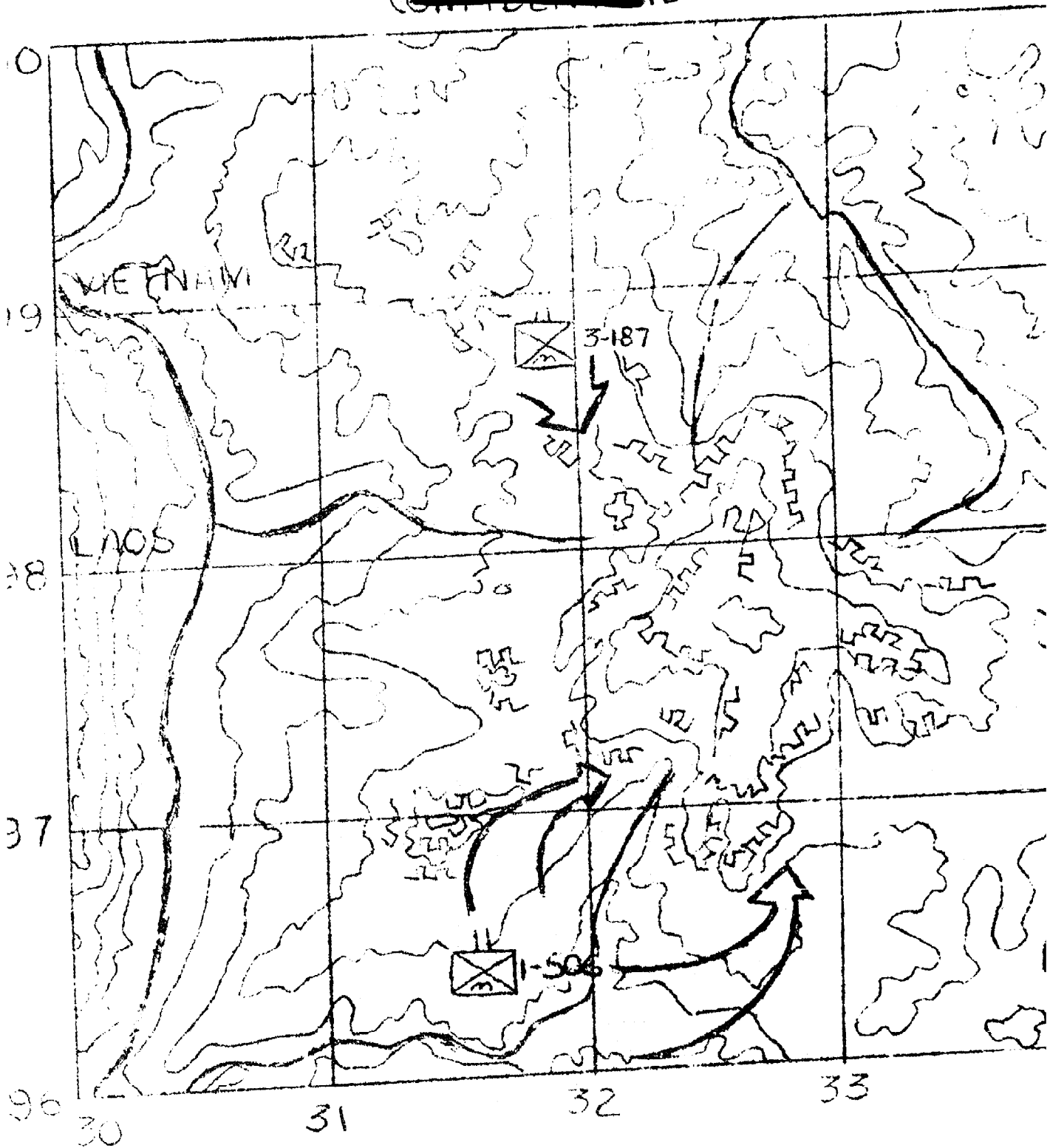


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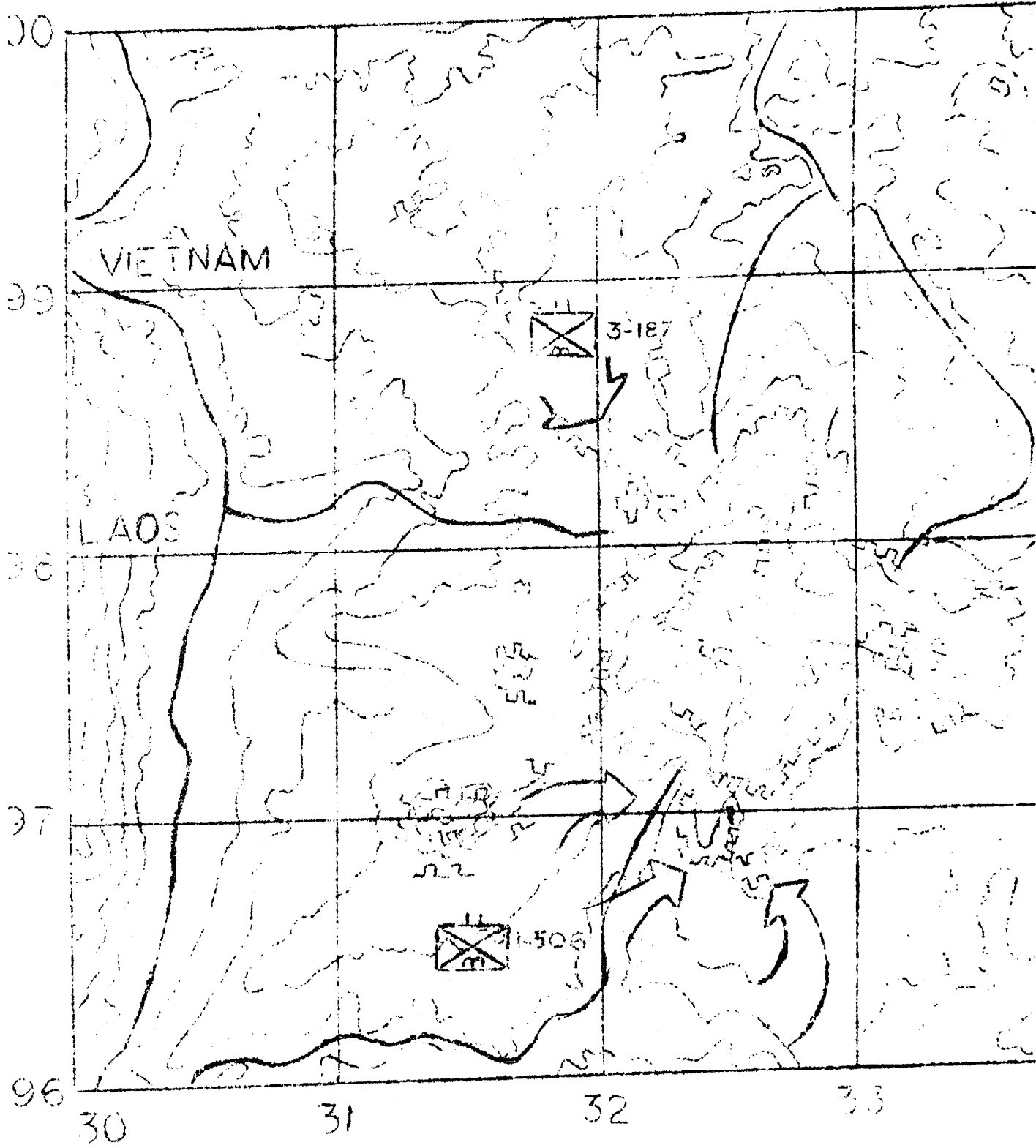
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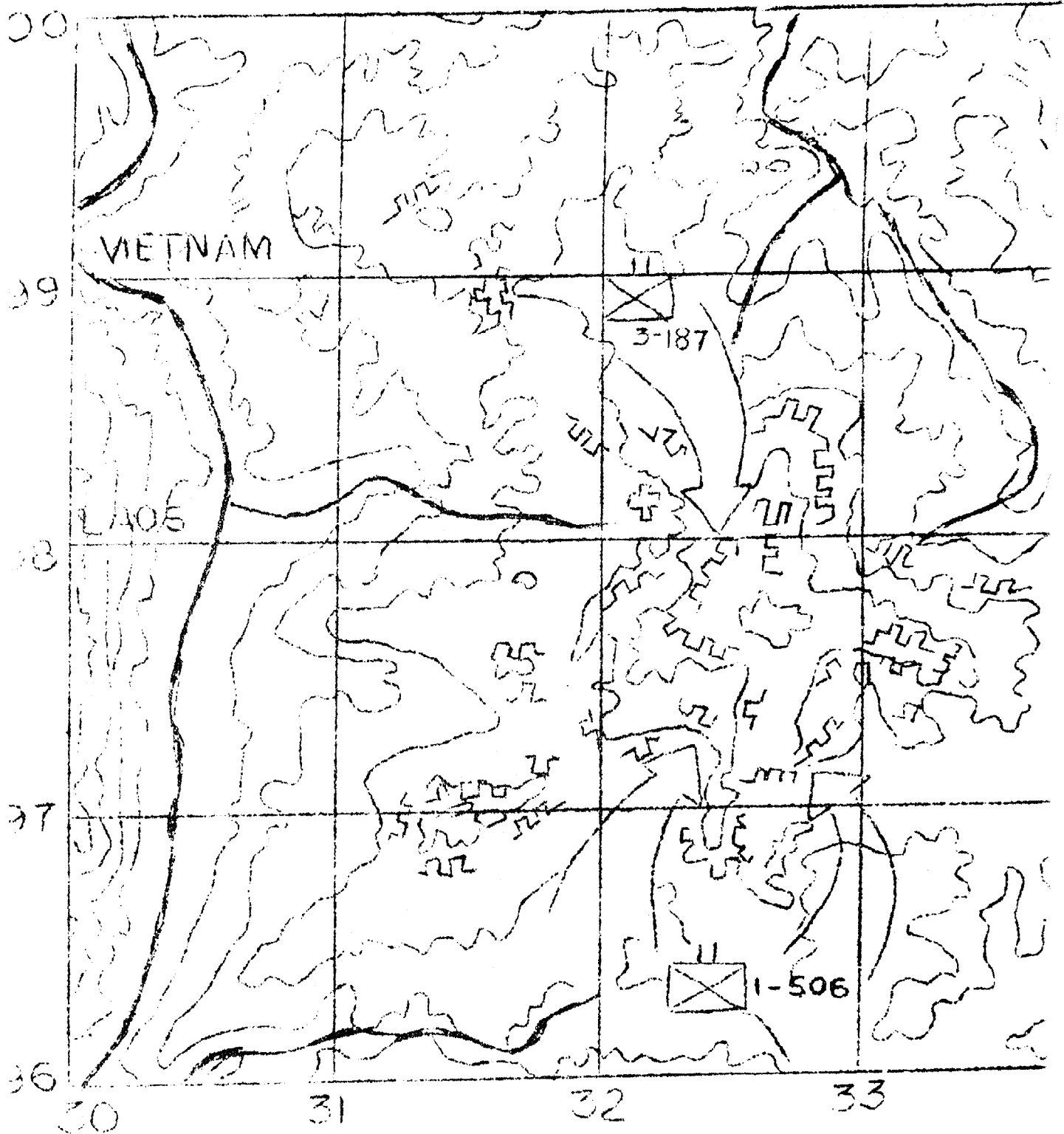


DONG AP BIA
SITUATION 16 MAY 1969



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SITUATION 17 MAY 1969

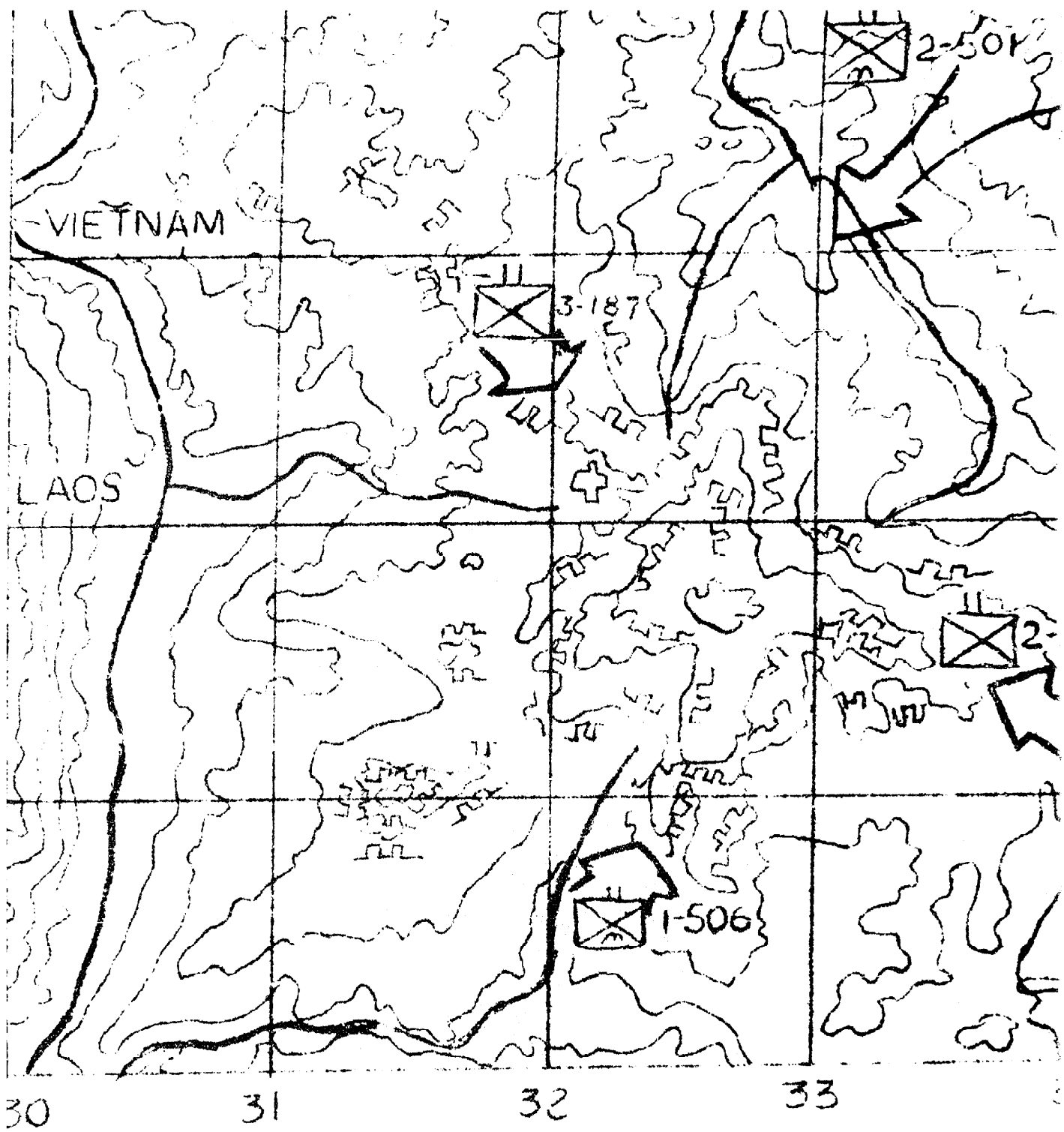


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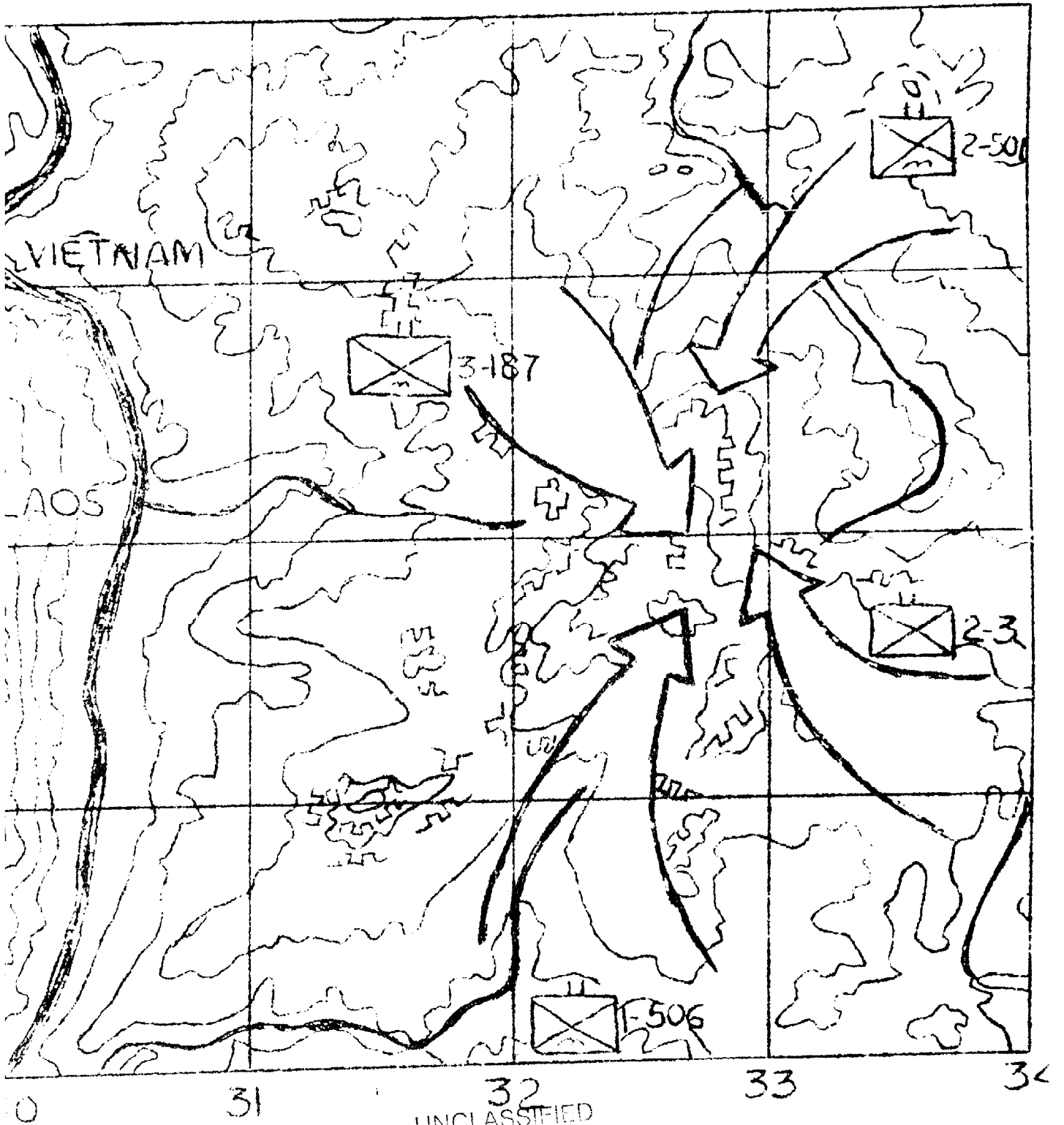
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SITUATION 19 MAY 1969

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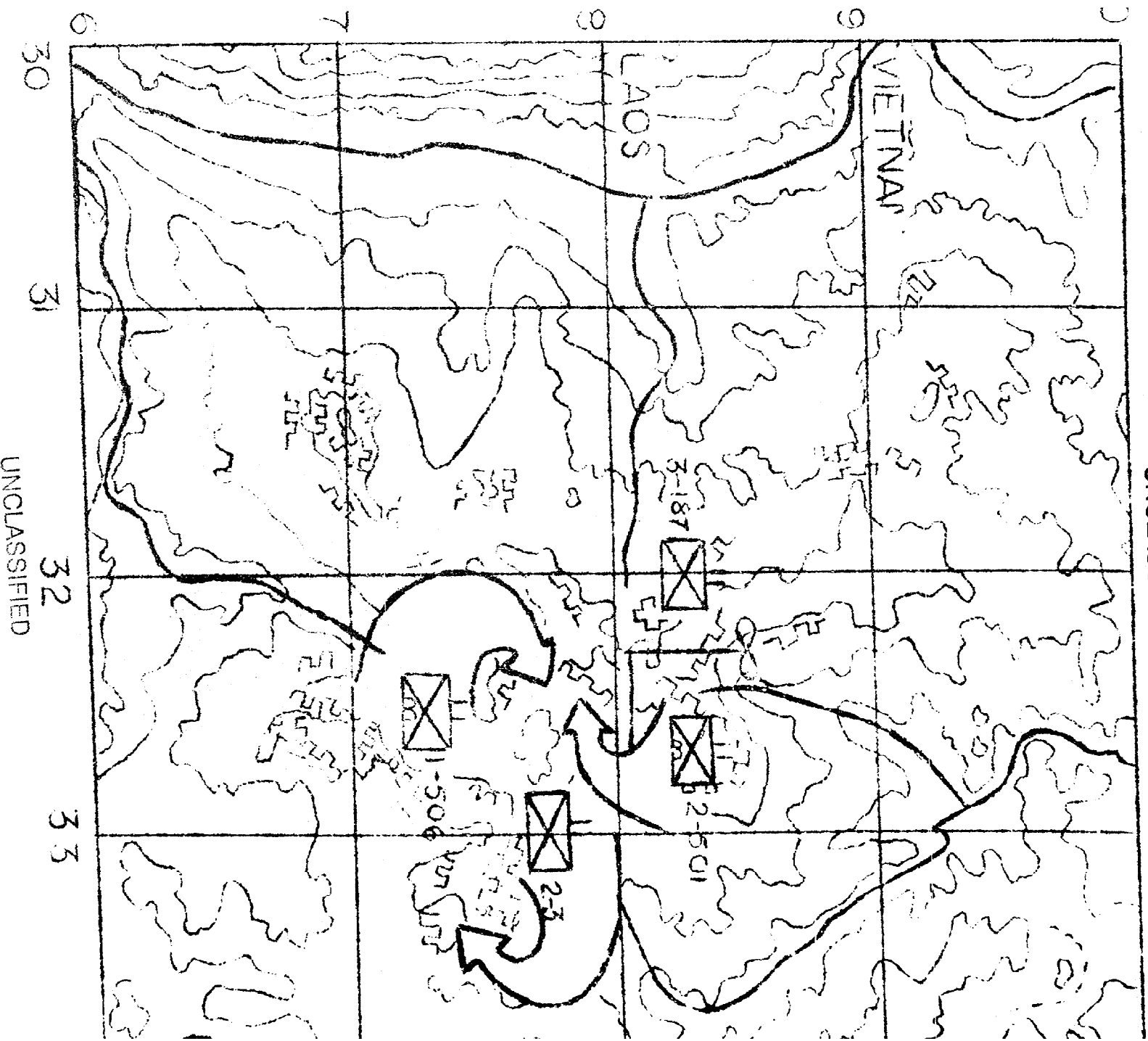


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SITUATION 20 MAY 1969

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DONG AP BIA

SITUATION 21 MAY 1969

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24 May 1969

FACT SHEET

SUBJECT: Enemy Losses- Dong Ap Bia

DATE	3-187	1-506	2-501	2-3 ARVN	2-17 Cav	TAC AIR	TOTAL
10 May	2				1		3
11 May	5						5
12 May	3						3
13 May							0
14 May	74				2	29	105
15 May	62						62
16 May	14	1					15
17 May	2	1				2	5
18 May	114	11					125
19 May	1	28			2	1	32
20 May	78	13		6		12	109
21 May		46		29			75
22 May		54		16	4	3	77
23 May		10	3				13
24 May			1				1
TOTAL	355	164	4	51	9	47	630

US TOTALS - 579
ARVN TOTALS - 51
TOTAL - 630

PW - 2 NVA

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24 May 1969

FACT SHEET

SUBJECT: Weapons Captured - Dong Ap Bia

	3-187		1-506		2-501		2-3 ARVN		2-17 Cav		TOTAL	
	<u>I</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>C</u>
10 May	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
11 May	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1
12 May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13 May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14 May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15 May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16 May	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
17 May	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
18 May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19 May	0	0	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4
20 May	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	4	0
21 May	7	1	61	15	3	0	2	1	0	0	73	17
22 May	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3
23 May	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0
24 May	0	0	51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	51	0
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL	12	2	131	25	4	0	5	1	0	2	152	25

I - Individual Weapons

C .. Crew Served Weapons

US: 84 & 24, and ARVN: 5 & 1

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APO San Francisco 96383

24 May 1969

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FACT SHEET

SUBJECT: Ordnance Employed - Dong Ap Bia

TAC AIR Support

<u>DATE</u>	<u>BOMBS (TONS)</u>	<u>NAPALM(TONS)</u>	<u>20MM (ROUNDS)</u>
10 May	154	23	6200
11 May	64	12	1600
12 May	82	4	8600
13 May	180	8	1800
14 May	84	11	
15 May	66	7	800
16 May	40	8	7200
17 May	81	13	1600
18 May	60	8	2600
19 May	90	12	
20 May	67	9	
21 May	70½	2	
22 May	22	15	
23 May	28	10½	
	<u>1088½</u>	<u>142½</u>	

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AVIX-00
 SUBJECT: Ordnance Employed - Dong Ap Bia

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ARTILLERY
 Number Rounds Fired

	<u>HE</u>	<u>WP</u>	<u>HC</u>	<u>CS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
105mm	10,634	517	69	254	11,474
155mm	3,919	94	17	0	4,030
8"	834	0	0	0	834
175mm	253	0	0	0	253
2.75 RKT	<u>2622</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2622</u>
Total	13,262	611	86	254	19,213

POUNDS OF ROUNDS FIRED

	<u>HE</u>	<u>WP</u>	<u>HC</u>	<u>CS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
105mm	356,262	17,475	2,282	8,382	384,901
155mm	372,470	8,854	1,605	0	382,929
8"	166,800	0	0	0	166,800
175mm	37,488	0	0	0	37,488
2.75 RKT	<u>53,866</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>53,866</u>
Total	986,886	26,829	3,887	8,382	1,025,984 (513 Tons)

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SUBJECT: Ordnance Delivered - Dong Ap Bia

ARTILLERY UNITS SUPPORTING DONG AP BIA

A/2-319 Arty (105)

B/2-319 Arty (105)

C/2-319 Arty (105)

B/2-11 Arty (155)

C/2-11 Arty (155)

A/12 Arty (ARVN) (105)

A/1-83 Arty (8")

C/1-83 Arty (175)

L/77th Arty (IRA)

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HEADQUARTERS 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION

Office of the Commanding General

APO San Francisco 96383

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FACT SHEET

SUBJECT: Dong Ap Bia

The following is a breakdown of the casualties inflicted on the Infantry elements of the Division during Operation Apache Snow (10 May 69 - 24 May 69) in securing Dong Ap Bia. These figures do not include the casualties sustained at Firebase Airborne.

1. Daily Figures

<u>DATE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>EVAC</u>	<u>WIA</u> <u>RTD</u>	<u>MLA*</u>
10 May	3-187	0	4	0	0
11 May	3-187	5	25	17	0
12 May	3-187	0	1	1	0
13 May	3-187	3	64	8	0
14 May	3-187	8	16	6	1
15 May	3-187	6	41	16	0
16 May	3-187	1	0	0	0
	1-506	<u>2</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL		3	14	0	0
17 May	1-506	6	8	0	0
18 May	3-187	12	55	1	1
	1-506	<u>5</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
TOTAL		17	79	2	3
19 May	1-506	3	18	1	0
20 May	3-187	0	49	1	0
	1-506	1	15	0	3
	2-506	<u>1</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL		2	75	1	3

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SUBJECT: Dong Ap Bia

WIA

<u>DATE</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>EVAC</u>	<u>RTD</u>	<u>MIA*</u>
21 May	3-187	1	0	0	0
	1-506	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{5}{5}$	$\frac{0}{0}$	$\frac{0}{0}$
TOTAL		2	5	0	0
22 May	2-501	0	1	0	0
23 May	1-506	0	7	1	0
	2-501	$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{9}{16}$	$\frac{0}{1}$	$\frac{0}{0}$
TOTAL		1	16	1	0
TOTALS		56	367	420	53

2. Unit Figures

	<u>KIA</u>	<u>EVAC</u>	<u>RTD</u>	<u>MIA*</u>
a. 3-187	36	255	50	2
b. 1-506	18	91	3	5
c. 2-506	1	11	0	0
d. 2-501	$\frac{1}{56}$	$\frac{10}{367}$	$\frac{0}{53}$	$\frac{0}{7}$
TOTALS				

* Personnel still carried in a MIA status are:

** 1-Spl Michael A. Huntley, US56730012, C/3-187 - reported MIA on 21 May.

** 2-Spl Jerry Lovell, US53909978, D/3-187 - reported as MIA on 18 May.

3-Spl Charles Cutlike, US54980437, B/1-506 - reported as MIA on 18 May.

4-Lt Joe P. Conkle, 05352137, B/1-506 - reported as MIA on 18 May.

** 5-Spl Charles Pearce, US54822261, B/1-506 - reported as MIA on 20 May.

** 6-Pfc William W. Smith, US56433088, C/1-506 - reported as MIA on 20 May.

** 7-Pfc Robert E. Goodner, US56433418, C/1-506 - reported as MIA on 20 May.

** Indicates those personnel whose assumed remains have been recovered.

The remains were flown to DaNang 23 and 24 May 69 for positive identification. Final ID is still pending.

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24 May 1969

SUBJECT: AP Account of Hill 937 Battle (Published in Washington Newspaper by Jay Scharbutt)

A battle for a mountain along the rugged Laotian frontier stretched into its ninth day Sunday with the United States command claiming 325 North Vietnamese killed.

U.S. losses were put at 37 killed and 209 wounded.

Heavy artillery barrages pounded the 3000 ft. high Dong Ap Bia mountain overlooking the A Shau Valley, after American paratroopers were beaten back with 12 men killed and 79 wounded Sunday in a tense attempt to seize the North Vietnamese fortress.

The US command reported that 125 North Vietnamese soldiers were killed in the 14 hour fight Sunday, but AP correspondent Jay Scharbutt reporting from the mountain said most of the communist losses were estimates by U.S. air observers after massive napalm, bomb and artillery strikes.

The mountain top has been blasted almost bare by artillery, bombs, napalm and rockets, but at last report an estimated 800 North Vietnamese soldiers were still holding out in deep bunkers.

The 3rd Bn, 187th Inf., of the 101st Abn Div. has made it to the top of the mountain three times, but has been driven off each time by a shattering stream of North Vietnamese rocket propelled grenades and machine gun fire.

SPl Anthony Toll, 20, who has been in nine of the assaults, said, "After all these air and artillery strikes, those gooks (North Vietnamese) are still in there fighting. All of us are wondering why they (the Americans) just can't pull back and B-52 (bomb) the hill. I've lost a lot of buddies up there. Not many guys can take it much longer."

But one Intelligence Officer said, "Look, those Gooks aren't stupid. They know exactly how much damage a B-52 strike does, how deep the bombs blow. They build their bunkers to withstand that. That's what they've done out there."

LTC Weldon Honeycutt, 38, commander of the 3rd Bn, when asked why paratroopers wanted to take the hill replied, "Well, for one thing, it overlooks a good deal of the A Shau Valley. For another, you pull

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back and Charlie (the North Vietnamese Army) sure as hell will follow you right down and hit you."

The mountain top fortress is believed to house a North Vietnamese regimental Headquarters and supply depot.

Col Joseph Conmy, commander of the 3rd Bde of the 101st Abn Div said, "If they are not protecting something they're just trying to inflict maximum American casualties."

He said the mountain isn't worth much from a strategic stand point, but added, "We don't really go out for a piece of terrain. We go out to clobber him...that's what we've done."

Another version of essentially the same story but which was filed by Scharbutt from the scene, said in part:

"Paratroopers came down from the mountain, their shirts dark green with sweat, their weapons gone, their bandages stained brown and red from mud and blood. Many cursed their hard nosed Battalion commander, LTC Honeycutt, who sent three companies Sunday to take the 3,000 ft mountain just over a mile east of Laos and overlooking shell pocketed A Chau Valley. They failed and suffered. "That damn black jack won't stop until he kills every one of us" said one of the 40-50 Abn Div troopers wounded. Honeycutt, 38, of Columbus, Ga., had been given an order: take the mountain."

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SUBJECT: News Release, VIETNAM-ZAIS (Filed by Les Santorelli)

Camp Eagle, South Vietnam, May 22, Reuter--The U.S. General whose controversial assault on "Hamburger Hill" was criticised by Senator Edward Kennedy said today it would be a "useless dialogue to pit his views" against the senator's.

The senator had described the repeated American onslaughts against the remote northern peak two miles from the Laotian border as "senseless and irresponsible." The North Vietnamese defense caved in two days ago after holding out for a week.

Gen. Melvin Zais said: "I fight the war here to the best of my ability as Division Commander, he performs as a senator to the best of his ability there in Washington. I don't know what he's thinking nor what information he was provided."

"I know for sure he wasn't here and I think we'd jut be engaging in useless dialogue to pit my views against his," he told newsmen.

Gen. Zais spoke to a press conference at this sprawling base camp about 35 miles east of the rugged mountain whose capture cost the lives of 48 Americans and nearly 600 North Vietnamese.

The General, who commands the 101st Airborne Division which took the peak, was pressed as to the tactical significance of the hill, Dong Ap Bia, which overlooks mountainous passes linking Laos to populated centres in Thua Thien Provice.

"The only significance of the hill was the fact that your North Vietnamese (were) on it ... the hill itself had no tactical significance," said the General.

"My mission was to conduct operations in the Northern A Shau Valley, to destroy the enemy forces and installations in the area of operations," said the General, from Fall River, Mass.

"We found the enemy on Hill 937 and that's where we fought him...that was my decision and the decision was to go up to the enemy on the hill."

"If we find him on any other hill in the A Shau Valley, in Vietnam, I can assure you I'll attack him," he added.

Asked whether more concentrated bombing could not have been used to

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seize the 3,000-foot peak, Gen. Zais said: "I don't know how many wars we have to go through to convince people that bombing alone can never do the trick."

He added the job could not have been done with big B-52 bombers. "They were dug in too deep, they were protected," he said.

On the controversy that the attack had triggered in Saigon and Washington, the General said: "These people are acting like this was a catastrophe for the U.S. troops. This was a tremendous, gallant victory."

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